

IN THE SPECIFICATION:

Please replace paragraph 0005 with the following rewritten paragraph:

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[0005] To provide an inexpensive, reliable, and widely adaptable beam structure that avoids the above-referenced and other problems would represent a significant advance in the art.

Please replace paragraph 0041 with the following rewritten paragraph:

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[0041] Panel 12a or 12b includes a support surface 24, a skirt 26 that extends generally downward around the perimeter of support surface 24, plurality of sockets 22a disposed generally at the corners of panel 12a or 12b, and a plurality of support structures (shown as rails or beams 28 in FIGURES 2-18, and rails or beams 30 in FIGURES 19-25). According to a preferred embodiment, the beams are spaced evenly across the width of panel 12a and span substantially the entire length of the panel. According to alternative embodiments, beams 28 or 30 may be concentrated in regions of increased stress loads and include one or more beams. Beams 28 terminate at a wall 32 that connects a pair of sockets 22a. Beams 30 terminate at skirt 26 or sockets 22b.

Please replace paragraph 0042 with the following rewritten paragraph:

[0042] Panels 12a also include a plurality of ribs 34 connect beams 28 or 30 with a lower side 36 of support surface 24. According to a preferred embodiment, ribs 34 are generally perpendicular to beams 28 or 30 and have varying dimensional characteristics. Also, ribs 34 may have any of a variety of dimensional characteristics (e.g., width, thicknesses, heights, etc.). According to an alternative embodiment, ribs 34 may be parallel to beams 28 or 30.

Please replace paragraph 0043 with the following rewritten paragraph:

[0043] Referring to FIGURES 2-18, each beam 28 includes a pair of opposing beam members (shown as "Z"-shaped members 38, wherein "Z-shaped" refers to the cross-sectional appearance of adjacent halves of the beam). Each Z-

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shaped member 38 includes an intermediate wall 40 and a pair of ends (shown as an upper end 42 and a lower end 44). Upper end 42 and lower end 44 provide structure for adjacent beams 28. An upper side 46 of upper end 42, at least partially, comprises support surface 24. According to a preferred embodiment, intermediate wall 40 is generally vertical and approximately perpendicular to support surface 24. According to alternative embodiments, intermediate wall 40 is generally not perpendicular to support surface 24 and may be configured to have any of a variety of angles relative to support surface 24.

Please replace paragraph 0045 with the following rewritten paragraph:

[0045] As shown in the cross sectional view in FIGURE 11, adjacent "Z"-shaped members 38 alternate directions across the width of panel 12a and form a continuous support along the length of panel 12a. The particular dimensional characteristics of "Z"-shaped members 38, are intended to provide increased strength and flexural resistance.

Please replace paragraph 0046 with the following rewritten paragraph:

[0046] According to an exemplary embodiment, upper ends 42 and lower ends 44 have an increased amount of material than in known "Z"-shaped supports. Such a configuration provides increased manufacturing efficiencies and strength-to-weight ratios. According to a preferred embodiment, upper ends 42 and lower ends 44 have a greater amount of wall thickness than intermediate wall 40, and extend further from intermediate wall 40 than in known "Z"-shaped supports. According to a particularly preferred embodiment, upper ends 42 and lower ends 44 have about 50% larger wall thickness than intermediate wall 40, and extend out from intermediate wall 40 by approximately 100% (i.e., approximately twice as far). According to alternative embodiments, the additional distance which upper ends 42 and lower ends 44 project from intermediate wall 40 may be determined by the desired performance characteristics (e.g., between about 20% and about 200%). By increasing strength and flexural resistance, panel 12a requires a reduced number of beams per square inch or square feet of surface area. Reducing the number of beams is intended to reduce the overall panel weight thereby reducing manufacturing and shipping costs. Also,

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adopting one or more of these design embodiments, the height of the intermediate wall need not be increased for additional strength.

Please replace paragraph 0048 with the following rewritten paragraph:

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[0048] As shown in FIGURES 3, 13, and 14, intermediate walls 40 and wall 32 are configured to terminate at socket 22a for a stronger integration and connection with sockets 22a. As shown, outer wall 58 of socket 22a is generally planar (e.g., flattened out) so that wall 32 may continue towards skirt 26. Generally, planar outer wall 58 at sockets 22a is intended to provide additional strength, strength characteristics that are more predictable, require simpler tooling for molds.

Please replace paragraph 0053 with the following rewritten paragraph:

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[0053] According to a preferred embodiment, a pair of "Z"-shaped beams 76 are disposed between "box" beams 30. "Z"-shaped beams 76 are shown to span ends of panel 12b. According to a preferred embodiment, ends 78 of "Z"-shaped beams 76 have a first height HH1 which is less than a second height HH2 at intermediate portion 80. "Z"-shaped beams 76 have a curvilinear parabolic shape with a vertex approximately in the middle of "Z"-shaped beams 76.

Please replace paragraph 0054 with the following rewritten paragraph:

[0054] "Z"-shaped beams 76 include a pair of intermediate side walls 82, 84, a bottom wall 86, and a rib 88 perpendicular to side walls 82, 84. A plurality of cavities 90 are defined by side walls 82, 84, bottom walls 86, and rib 88. According to a preferred embodiment, a plurality of ribs 34 are disposed between beams 30 and "Z"-shaped beams 76, and are perpendicular to side walls 64, 66 of beams 30 and side walls 82, 84 of "Z"-shaped beams 76. Alternatively, ribs 34 extend from lower side 36 of support surface 24 so as to increase rigidity. Ribs 34 are disposed generally parallel with both beams 30 and "Z"-shaped beams 76 and have any of a variety of heights.